

considerations last stated, for nothing has been done to relieve the drains and sewers of their worst offence. The evolution of foul and noxious gases in the drains is certainly not prevented by scouring the sewers. In the mean time the poison exists underfoot, and exudes at every pregonable point within and about our houses, and it rises at every grating in our streets, though the senses may become dull to them by constant suffering.

Now this is an evil which can be greatly ameliorated, if it cannot, indeed, be wholly cured; but it is by a process that to be effective must be general, and therefore, it must be added, compulsory. The process is of familiar application in the ventilation of mines, and particularly of coal mines. An up-cast shaft containing a common chimney flue carried up at the back of every house, and connected with the house-drains at their highest level, would give vent to the foul air in the drains, and discharge it into the upper air. The foul air evolved by heat expands, and expanding it rises, and rising it would be followed by cold air settling down by the gulley gratings in the streets, thus constituting their inlets downcast shafts, and the sewers and drains themselves channels for the currents setting to the up-cast shafts, by which they would be relieved. The down draught into the sewers would carry with it much soot and fine dust, which would settle upon the liquid current and pass off with it, and so remove some of the tangible as well as the intangible impurities, before referred to, from the air in our streets and about our houses.

Much in this way might be effected by the aid of causes in constant operation, but if the up-cast shaft to every house were also a fire-flue, or were only aided by the draught of a neighbouring fire, the up-current would be sufficient not only to prevent the house drains from retaining foul air, but the foul air would be thrown off into the upper air with better effect and be dissipated innocuously and without offence, instead of steaming as it now does from the sewers into the air where it cannot be avoided.

W. HOSKING.

PUBLIC MEETING ON ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

A PUBLIC meeting of architects was held on the 6th inst. in the Hall of Lyon's Inn, to adopt certain resolutions, with a view to prepare a code of regulations to be mutually binding on competing architects and committees of selection, so as ultimately to remove many of the evils of the existing system of architectural competition.

Mr. G. GODWIN presided.

The CHAIRMAN said that, although there were many in London better qualified than himself to preside over the meeting, he had thought it best to waive all hesitation in complying with the committee's request, and, however imperfect his qualifications, he hoped they would take the will for the deed. He himself had little to do with competitions, and had, therefore, no personal motive in coming forward on the occasion. The few competitions in which he had been engaged had each its moral. One was the case of a public hospital. A sum was there stipulated for the cost of the building, and on inquiring of the secretary if fuller and more elaborate design, involving greater expense, would be received, he had been gravely assured that it would not. He had, therefore, on that occasion, restricted his plans, and in the end a design was selected which cost three times the sum stipulated. In another instance, — a very large establishment, — the selected design was preferred to his own mainly on the question of expense; but the building carried out had cost more than double the amount stated by the author. The meeting, however, were familiar with these experiences. The evils competition had produced were beyond description. The chicanery, the deceit, the bad feeling, heartburnings, and anxiety which they induced, would make, if told, a melancholy story. And what was the result? The public, finding that architects had so long been giving their labours for nothing, had come to

the conclusion that that *nothing* was actually the worth of those labours. A gentleman had called on him with a design for a summer-house, complaining of the scandalous imposition of an architect in charging him *three guineas* for it! He could not be convinced of the moderation of the charge, but wishing to show the design to his friends had afterwards no hesitation in paying *four guineas* to a lithographer, formerly copying it on the stone! This was a proof of the ignorance which prevailed as to the value of design. Architects, however, themselves were much to blame, when premiums of 10*l.*, or for a workshop at Stockton, 5*l.* for a Town Hall at Colehester, and three guineas for the Corn Exchange at East Retford, were eagerly responded to. If a man offered five guineas for the best legal opinion on any question for which ten would be charged in the regular way, he would be considered mad. What would the College of Physicians say to the offer of half a guinea for the best medical opinion in a doubtful case? Yet architects were daily treated so, and the offers were replied to by so many designs that the committees scarcely knew what to do with them, — and, as in the case of the Peel Testimonial, at Salford, not only thought, but stated that they were doing a service to the architects, by keeping all the designs, and hanging them up in the Literary Institution. Under these circumstances, some persons had argued that architects should abandon competition altogether. He was not prepared to agree in the propriety of that advice. Competition gave the means of coming forward to young and unknown talent, which might otherwise be long kept down. The evil was rather in its mal-administration, and its remedy was in the hands of the architects themselves. The main difficulty was in the ignorance of the judges. It had happened to him, as it had no doubt to many of them, to be called upon to examine and adjudicate upon designs; and it was unnecessary to dwell upon the difficulty and delicacy of the task. Yet the gentlemen who were usually the judges of these matters at once detected the best plans, or in some cases the plans of their sons or relatives, and the whole matter was decided in less than no time. Even a professional tribunal was not always satisfactory, and however annoying it might be to some, he could not but refer to the proceedings of the tribunal appointed in the matter of the Great Exhibition, which, with the highest respect for these gentlemen individually, he could not but feel had done great harm to the cause of competition. The first requisites in competitions were clear instructions, and the rejection of all designs which did not adhere to these instructions. Above all things, committees were bound to reject any design which could not be carried out for the stipulated sum. As to an exact estimate, he had always maintained that this should not be expected from an architect unless he were paid for preparing it. To do so accurately often cost more than was offered for the whole design, specification, and everything besides; nevertheless, committees were bound not to select designs not prepared in accordance with the stipulated terms. In the case of King's College Hospital recently, — and in the London Fever Hospital, four or five years ago, — several architects were applied to for designs, and all of them were paid; the author of the best being engaged to carry out the work. That was the fairest course, and those who wished to profit by the talent of many architects ought in justice to pay them all, — at least the money out of pocket. The stipulations for the King's College Hospital competition had been drawn up by Professor Hosking, whose opinions on the subject of competitions were well known, and he (the chairman) would take that opportunity to bear testimony to Mr. Hosking's endeavours to maintain the dignity of the profession. The present meeting would do much good if it only led committees to feel that architects were badly treated, and in fact robbed, by being induced to devote weeks and months to the preparation of designs which the judges were manifestly incompetent to decide upon. He hoped, however, they

should do much more. The resolutions they might adopt would be widely disseminated, and if they could induce the members of the Institute, of the Architectural Association, and of the provincial societies, to agree never to compete, unless the main conditions they adopted were complied with, they would produce a much more wholesome state of things than the present. He hoped the elder members of the profession, although not interested in the question themselves, would come forward to aid in obtaining a satisfactory adjustment of it. It had been truly said that "when every man was his own end, things would come to a very bad end;" but he was confident architects in general had not such an exclusive regard for their individual interests, and would look beyond themselves. Without further detaining the meeting, he would call upon the hon. secretary, Mr. William Young, to state the intended course of the proceedings.

Mr. Young said, the association had, nearly two years ago, nominated from its own members a committee, to consider the best mode of carrying into practical effect the advice given to architects in the Report on Public Competitions issued by the Royal Institute of British Architects; and with the assembling of the present meeting the duties, as a fact, the existence of that committee would terminate. Its deliberations had resulted in the publication of a printed report, recommending the reviving of the present meeting, and a code of regulations for the management of architectural competitions, carefully based upon the principles of the Institute referred to. The code had been for some time before the public, and was pretty well known, so that it was sufficient to simply allude to the gratifying fact of its having been taken up by the Bristol Society of Architects, and its provisions more or less incorporated, in a valuable code of "propositions" drawn up by that society, a second edition of which had that evening been laid before the meeting, and been then, as he understood, brought for the first time before the public. He proceeded to read communications which had been received from the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and from the Secretary of the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland, from the Council of the Bristol Society of Architects, and the President of the Liverpool Society of Architects; and read extracts from, and alluded to, letters received from various architects, practicing in different parts of the kingdom, among whom were Messrs. Tite, Bonning, Grellet, G. French, Joseph Clarke, James Bell, G. Abbott, and Geo. Morgan, of London; Messrs. Grogan, Cahett, Walters, and Spencer, of Manchester; Messrs. Pritchett, of York; Ashworth, of Essex; Mitchell, of Hertford; Barnes, of Ipswich; Waddington, of Derby; Kimpton, of Hertford; Whitcord, of Maidstone; Newman, of Vestnor, in the West; Wight; Barnes, of Dorchester; Stevens, of Taunton; and Billing, of Reading, the greater part of whom had spontaneously written to the committee on finding that the present meeting in London was contemplated. He then gave a brief outline of the resolutions that would be submitted to the meeting, which, it was hoped, would that evening nominate a public Competitions Committee to bring the question to a close. He concluded by reminding the meeting that, as the Architectural Association and the Bristol Society of Architects had, at some pecuniary cost and great pains, accomplished the present promising commencement of a better state of things, it was the bounden duty of every member of the profession who really desired to enhance its respectability, to manfully aid the movement so well begun, and to contribute, however slightly, towards the expenses which the public committee of gentlemen to be nominated by the meeting must necessarily incur.

The substance of the report made by the committee of the Institute of British Architects in 1849 was read.

Mr. Fowler, Vice-President of the Institute of British Architects, moved the first resolution adopting that report as the basis of the movement, and setting forth the necessity of obtaining a satisfactory code of regulations. The speaker said he had attended the present meeting, feeling that he behoved every one who had the interest of the profession at heart, to come forward on all questions

* Quoted in THE BUILDER, of May 31, page 32.

† This communication entered very fully into the question of competitions, and concluded as follows: — "It is, however, an opinion firmly held by our society that, while out for one moment disparaging the great advantages to be derived from an improved management of competitions, no means will be found effectual to establish the profession of Architecture upon a fair and honourable footing, than the institution of a college for the purpose of granting degrees in the Art."